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***Supplementary Aids and Services***

***(SAS) Consideration Toolkit***

COMPONENT A:

***Introduction and Preparation for Use***

COMPONENT A provides an overview of the SAS consideration process, describing who is responsible for actions at each step of the process.

--Review COMPONENT A *prior* to the use of any other SAS Toolkit components.

--Refer to COMPONENT B *throughout* the use of the SAS Toolkit

* The Supplementary Aids and Services Toolkit guides teams through steps that lead to the identification of services and supports to enable a student with a disability to learn and succeed within general education classroom settings.
* The SAS Consideration Toolkit consists of five components that are packaged separately to facilitate ease of use.
* PaTTAN and Intermediate Unit consultants have been trained in the use of these tools, and are available to provide on-site support to IEP teams as they become familiar with the process.

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**Using the SAS Toolkit Components**

A sequence is outlined to guide teams through the SAS Consideration Process. In practice, the use of the tools is an interactive rather than linear process, with two exceptions.

* Learning about the use of the tool is a necessary *first* step;
* Creation of the student profile is a critical *second* step.

The remaining steps build upon this foundation. The entire process is summarized in the table below.

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| **Implementation Sequence** | ***Suggested* *Personnel*** | **Toolkit Component(s)** | SAS Self Check |
| Learn About the SAS Consideration Toolkit and Process | *Special education administrators, PaTTAN and IU Technical Assistance Personnel serve as resources to IEP team* | Overview and Preparation for Use |
| Compile and organize information about the student | *All team members* | Student Profile |
| Create profile of general education setting(s) | *General and special educator compile information and share with team* | SAS Consideration Tool, Step 1 |
| Identify potential barriers to learning and curriculum access in the general education classroom | *All team members* | SAS Consideration Tool, Step 2 |
| Identify strategies and services to eliminate barriers | *All team members; specialists as needed to supplement team expertise (e.g., AT specialist, behavior specialist, PaTTAN/IU consultants)* | SAS Consideration Tool, Step 3  SAS Resource Wheel |
| Discuss and analyze appropriate SAS options and determine viable alternatives for implementation | *All team members and consultants* | SAS Consideration Tool, Step 4 |

**Supplementary Aids and Services (SAS) Consideration Toolkit**

**Introduction**

Supplementary aids and services (SAS) create a system of support that enables many students with disabilities to learn and participate alongside typical peers, regardless of their unique instructional needs and differences. Consistent with the least restrictive environment (LRE) principle of IDEA, IEP teams must thoughtfully consider a full array of supplementary aids and services that make it possible for students with disabilities to be included in general education classrooms, non-academic, and extracurricular activities. The ***SAS Consideration Toolkit***, developed for use within schools throughout Pennsylvania, provides a systematic approach to structure this process.

This approach requires IEP team members to collaboratively gather and analyze information about a student in relation to the regular education classroom(s) that represent the *first* environment(s) considered as his/her educational placement. The tools guide information gathering efforts that begin prior to the writing of an IEP, continuing throughout the program planning and IEP development process. After completing the activities that comprise this Toolkit, teams are able to identify environmentally-referenced supplementary aids and services that will support a student to participate and learn within the general education classroom.

Components of this toolkit incorporate several well established curricular and program planning practices. First, the consideration process utilizes the person/setting discrepancy analysis strategies that are characteristic of the *ecological inventory process* (Brown et al., 1979), familiar to those with experience developing individualized curricula for students with significant disabilities, Second, strategies embedded in materials developed by the Center for Applied Special Education Technology (CAST) in their innovative work in the area of Universal Design for Learning have been utilized. Specifically, this tool incorporates the concept of systematically reviewing the methods, materials, and assessments in a lesson, unit, or curriculum, a strategy utilized in CAST’s Curriculum Barriers Tool (CAST, nd). Finally, supplementary aids and services domains, identified by Etscheidt and Bartlett (1999), have been utilized in this toolkit as an organizational structure for potential support strategies and services.

The SAS Consideration Toolkit has been piloted by schools teams in Pennsylvania who support students with a range of disabilities, including those with disability labels of mental retardation, learning disability, and autism. While this tool was designed to help teams during the educational planning and placement decision-making process, yielding information to include in a student’s IEP, teams found the strategies helpful in other situations, including:

* Problem-solving inclusion support issues;
* Planning for supports within a new general education curricular area;
* Engaging students with disabilities to identify supports necessary for success in general education classrooms; and
* Comprehensive planning for transition to a new setting or grade.

**Preparing to Use the Supplementary Aids and Services**

**Consideration Tool**

The Supplementary Aids and Services Consideration Tool is a structured method to analyze the instructional, physical, and social environment of a general education classroom from the perspective of an individual student. The intended outcome of using this tool is a list of environmentally-referenced supplementary aids and services that enhance participation and learning for a student with a disability in the general education classroom. As illustrated in the table on page three, this use of this tool follows the completion of the Student Profile. Using the tools in this sequence provides a solid foundation of student-specific information upon which the steps described in the remainder of this document can build.

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| **Step 1: Develop Profile of General Education Classroom(s)** |

A Classroom Profile is a compilation of information about the methods, materials, practices, and physical characteristics of a general education setting. The reference point for this activity is the general education classroom(s) that a student would participate in if he or she did not have a disability. While the identification of this setting is not difficult in some schools (e.g., small schools with one classroom at each grade level), the choice is not as straightforward in all settings. This requires flexibility in the approach to implementation.

**Which Setting(s)?**

* When classroom options are available, an initial comparison of the choices by the IEP team may result in the identification of one choice that represents the best match between a student’s needs, strengths, interests, and the instructional setting and classroom characteristics. It may be readily apparent, for example, that the number of students in a class, the physical layout or location of the classroom in the school building, the experience of a classroom teacher, and/or the presence of peers who know a student, make one classroom preferable to others. Narrowing down options initially will allow the team to proceed with the profile of a specific setting.
* A similar approach may be useful at the secondary level, where curricular electives are available for all students. Initial information about setting options should be shared with the student and family to ensure their input in these class scheduling decisions.
* If it is not possible to focus on a specific general education setting(s) prior to an IEP meeting, it will be necessary to think more globally about available options. Consider characteristics common to the potential choices (e.g., practices common to the three sections of 4th grade that available within the home school) when completing the profile. When a specific classroom *is* selected, the team can revisit the setting analysis, as necessary, adding more specific information to ensure alignment of the supplementary aids and services with the instructional characteristics of this particular classroom.

**Who Compiles the Information?**

The instructional, social, and physical environment of the classroom is best described by those individuals most familiar with daily practices in this setting. Therefore, the general education teacher(s) is most often the primary source of information for Step 1. Gathering information from the general educator can occur in several ways.

* The special educator can collaboratively begin this step with the general educator either *in advance of* or *during* a team meeting. **This is the preferred option for this information gathering**. The information is then discussed with the entire team, providing a basis for the analysis required in Step 2
* When collaborative information-gathering options are not possible, the first column may be completed independently by general educator(s), sharing this information with the entire team as an initial “report” for further team discussion. A special educator or other professional who co-teaches in the general education classroom could also complete the environmental scan in Step 1 if they have sufficient knowledge of classroom practices. If this is the case, it is important to share the document with the general educator prior to the IEP meeting to make sure it is an accurate reflection of the classroom instructional environment before it is shared with the entire student team.
* Time can be allocated for this activity at a team meeting, enabling the general educator to share information that will assist all team members in understanding the dynamics of the general education classroom. If this approach is taken, it is important to allocate sufficient team time for this to occur.

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| **Step 2: Identify Potential Barriers to Curricular Access and Instruction** |

Comprehensive information about the student’s skills, learning characteristics, and priority needs is necessary in order to consider the instructional implications of classroom practices and routines for this individual student. Relevant student information may be found in the Evaluation Report, previous IEP documents, and/or progress reports. Parent input is essential to creating a comprehensive profile of the student as well as input from all other team members. In addition, student peers have been found to be valuable sources of instructionally relevant information. This information is summarized in the Student Profile, completed prior to beginning the consideration process.

This information provides the basis for an analysis of potential discrepancies between what is occurring in the classroom, as reflected in the ratings compiled for various instructional practices produced in Step 1, and what is needed by the student to access instruction. The purpose of this analysis is to be *proactive*, responding to potential mismatches between a student and the instructional environment before actual problems occur. Selecting appropriate supports can eliminate or minimize the instructional impact of any mismatch between *what* and *how* a student learns, and prevailing practices in the general education classroom.

If this discussion is occurring during the development of the student’s IEP, it should be noted that this same information is needed to document a student’s strengths and needs, present level of performance, and current access to the general education curriculum.

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| **Step 3: Identify Strategies and Services to Eliminate Barriers** |

It is critical that teams draw upon the broad base of available information about the student and effective strategies to support students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Teams that have limited experience with using a range of supplementary aids and services to support inclusive placements must seek out the information, support and training that *they* need in order to develop program plans that are consistent with LRE principles. Therefore, identification of support strategies may necessitate:

* Use of the Supplementary Aids and Services Consideration Wheel and/or other information resources to identify available strategies and services to address a specific instructional mismatch.
* Involvement of a consultant or resource person who is experienced in inclusive practices and specific support strategies (e.g., assistive technology, strategies for students with sensory limitations), providing an opportunity for job-embedded coaching during this program planning process. Teams have ready access to consultants from their Intermediate Unit and PaTTAN Educational Consultants.
* Engaging peers in the problem-solving process of brainstorming and identifying support strategies.

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| **Step 4: Discuss Appropriate Supplementary Aids and Services Options and Identify Viable Alternatives for Implementation** |

The team must identify the most appropriate supplementary aids and services needed to support this student’s learning and participation in the general education setting(s) based on a careful consideration of the interaction between general education classroom characteristics and practices, individual student learning needs and characteristics, and potential strategies available to serve as an instructional scaffold for the student. This is also the time to identify the supports needed by *adults*to effectively implement the SAS that will be included in the student’s IEP.

While many possibilities may have been generated during Step 3 of this process, the team must determine which combination of services and supports represents the most viable starting point for program implementation. Like other aspects of the student’s instructional program, ongoing evaluation and fine tuning is critical to the success of this process.

* Progress monitoring, linked to the student’s IEP goals and objectives, will assist in determining the effectiveness of these supports. It is essential that desired student learning outcomes are clearly identified, serving as a consistent reference point as new instructional methods and supports are introduced.
  + In some cases, a team may implement a support strategy, evaluate its effectiveness over time, and determine that it is not having the desired effect. If this occurs, information generated in Step 3 can be revisited, and other support options may be tried.

Given this overview, the team is ready to proceed with implementation of the SAS Consideration Process.

**References**

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